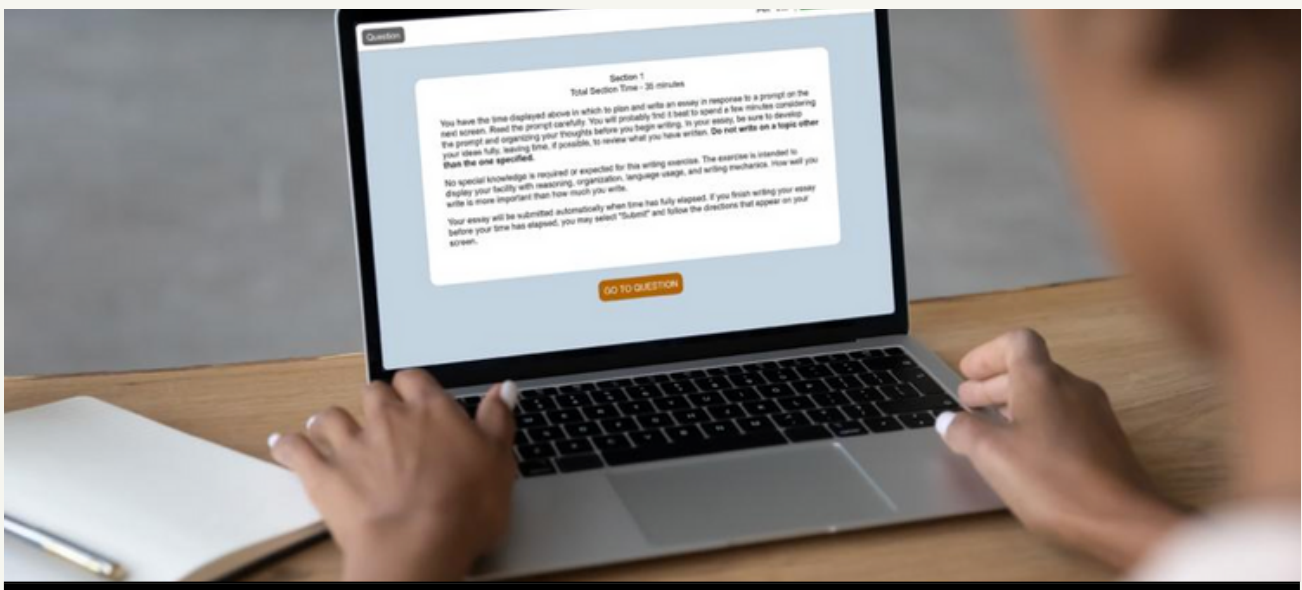


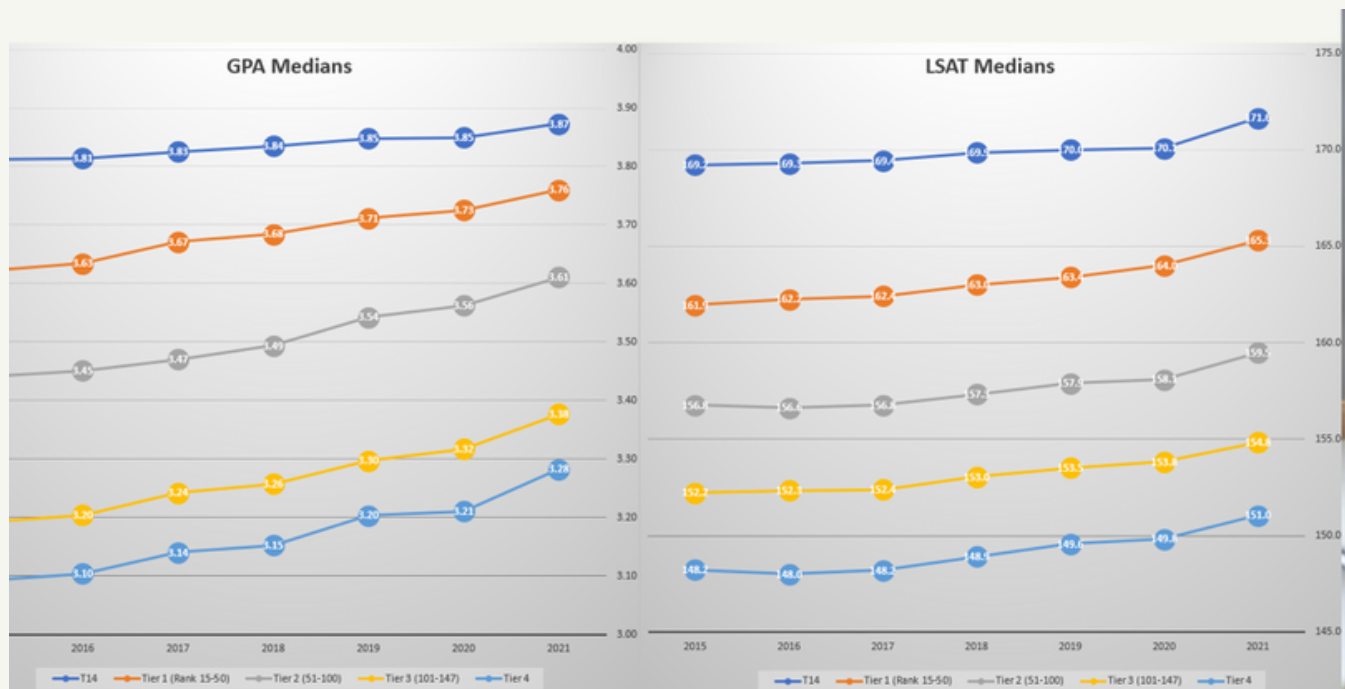
LSAT and GPA Inflation: **WHY IT HAPPENED & HOW IT'S AFFECTED LAW SCHOOL ADMISSIONS**

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If you look into the data, the last two law school application cycles have been chock-full of surprises. Applicants with almost-perfect GPAs and insanely high LSAT scores were being turned down by both their target and safety law schools, causing a frenzy of confusion. This left a lot of shoo-ins feeling demoralized, having them doubt whether law school is the right path for them. The recurring question ends up being: What caused this major change in admission trends?

The start of the COVID-19 pandemic not only drastically affected the lives of most Americans, but also excessively altered how law school application cycles traditionally look. One significant factor was the introduction of the LSAT Flex. The LSAT Flex was a shortened version of the LSAT that was proctored remotely from the start of COVID-19 all the way through June 2021. According to LSAC, applicants with high scores (160-180) shot up 35% compared to the year before. For many test takers, the shorter LSAT felt tremendously less difficult, as they required much less stamina to excel in it. This led to them becoming not as prone to making trivial mistakes. The increase in high LSAT scores could also be attributed to the fact that people acquired more time to dedicate to studying for the LSAT, considering that most were taking virtual classes or working remotely. When inflation takes place in the economy, it decreases the purchasing power of money. In the same way, a surge in high LSAT scores decreased the power and value that came with them.



Something extremely similar occurred when it came to applicants' GPAs. The sudden switch to online learning resulted in students receiving a lot more A grades on their semester transcripts than normal. If there are a great deal more applicants bringing in stellar stats, how special can a high GPA and LSAT really be? The evidence can be found in law school medians. The University of Michigan Law School is ranked #10 in Best Law Schools by the U.S. News and World Report. In 2019, University of Michigan Law had a median LSAT of 169 and a median GPA of 3.77. However, in 2021, the median LSAT shot up to 171 and the median GPA became 3.84. In addition, LSAC found that there was an immense rise in the number of applicants overall. All of these factors seemed to contribute greatly to the difficulty of law school admissions during these uncertain times.

It is interesting to see how the pandemic has been able to change the lives of those around us, reshape the economy, and skew law school admissions statistics so radically. Nonetheless, there is good news for those applying to the 2022-2023 cycle! The latest LSAC data illustrates that the number of U.S. applicants with scores in the 160-180 range has dropped 14.8% compared to this time last year. Applicant numbers are also down across the board, causing experts to predict this cycle to be less difficult. Keeping this bright side in mind, I wish luck to all the law school applicants of this year and of the future!